

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VALLET 01206 191522Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

IO-13 /083 W

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R 191455Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7035

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

EC BRUSSELS 295

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

DIA

USCINCEUR

USDOCOSOUTH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VALLETTA 1206

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MT

SUBJ: CHANGES IN MINTOFF'S CABINET

REF: VALLETTA 1103

1. ON OCTOBER 15, PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF ANNOUNCED TWO CHANGES IN HIS CABINET, WHICH HE HAD APPOINTED ONLY THREE WEEKS EARLIER (REFTEL). THESE CHANGES FOLLOWED THE RESIGNATION FROM THE CABINET, AND THE PARLIAMENT, OF DR. ANTON BUTTIGIEG, THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOR PARTY AND THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, LANDS, HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS.

2. REPLACING BUTTIGIEG AS MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, LANDS,
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PAGE 02 VALLET 01206 191522Z

HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS IS DR. JOSEPH CASSAR

(A LAWYER), PREVIOUSLY MINISTER OF EDUCATION. DR. CASSAR ALSO WAS MINISTER OF JUSTICE DURING AN EARLIER LABOR ADMINISTRATION IN 1955-58.

3. DR. CASSAR'S REPLACEMENT AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION IS DR. PHILIP MUSCAT (A PHYSICIAN), WHO HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT SINCE 1962. THIS IS MUSCAT'S FIRST CABINET POST.

4. COMMENT: DR. ANTON BUTTIGIEG'S RESIGNATION, AND THE CABINET MANEUVERING WHICH FOLLOWED, IS GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE RELATED TO THE FORTHCOMING RETIREMENT OF THE PRESIDENT, SIR ANTHONY MAMO. IT HAS BEEN RUMORED THAT DR. BUTTIGIEG WILL REPLACE SIR ANTHONY AS PRESIDENT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. WHO MINTOFF WILL TAP TO TAKE OVER BUTTIGIEG'S FORMER ROLE AS "DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER" IS NOT YET KNOWN, SINCE THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT MINTOFF MAY NOW PREFER THAT THERE BE TWO DEPUTY LEADERS OF THE LABOR PARTY -- ONE FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND ONE FROM THE GENERAL WORKERS UNION -- IN ORDER TO "BALANCE" THE TWO MAJOR SOURCES OF HIS POLITICAL SUPPORT. END COMMENT. SMITH

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